

FASHION.

A POEM.

[Price Two SHILLINGS.]

WASH I O N.

W A P O E M.

[Print Two Shillings.]

F A S H I O N.

A P O E M.

ADDRESSED TO THE

LADIES OF GREAT-BRITAIN.

I N T W O B O O K S

B O O K F I R S T.

*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
Corpora*

OVID'S MET.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, N^o. 39, Fleet-Street.

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T O T H E
LADIES OF GREAT-BRITAIN.

*Bards, beware,
How far your moral tales incense the fair!* **PAMELA.**

“ **W**ERE ever ladies treated thus?
“ To level all his wit at us!
“ To make us objects for his laughter,
“ And ridicul’d in times hereafter!
“ A paltry wretch! but he shall know,
“ We females won’t be treated so.
“ What! shall he regulate our dress,
“ And talk of this and that excess!
“ Shall he, a silly rhiming fool,
“ Expose us all to ridicule?
“ Why, ladies, sure you will not bear it;
“ Had I his Poem here, I’d tear it.
“ Times now are at a pretty pass,
“ When ev’ry despicable ass
“ May cut his jokes on us, and dare
“ Unpunish’d to attack the fair.

“ But oh, this usage plainly shews
“ The courage of our modern beaux!
“ Time was when poets might as well
“ Have gone, and toll'd their passing-bell,
“ As satiriz'd a lady: Then
“ The coxcombs had not spoil'd the men;
“ But now they may abuse that will,
“ And treat defenceless women ill.
“ This puppy knows it too, and hence
“ Dares scribble his impertinence.
“ The coward! could we ladies fight,
“ He durst as soon be hang'd, as write!
“ But is no way for vengeance left?
“ Are we of ev'ry means bereft?
“ May ev'ry puppy that thinks fit,
“ Against us exercise his wit?
“ Why don't these men, who say we trample
“ On sense, set us a good example?
“ Of womens' dress make such a pother!
“ Why don't they criticise each other?

“ They

- " They always make a mighty fuss,
 " Of ev'ry little fault in us;
 " While they are equally absurd,
 " And no one utters half a word.
 " But we'll have vengeance, that we will,
 " We'll teach 'em how to use us ill!
 " If they about our head-dress write,
 " We'll wear it twice as high, for spite:
 " If they to mock our buckles chuse,
 " We'll put whole armour on our shoes!
 " As for this puppy, when we know him——
 " We'll get Miss More to write a Poem;
 " And let this silly coxcomb see
 " Women have much more wit than he!"

Pray, Ladies, hush a moment! pray

Hear what your Author has to say.

Nay, don't condemn a bard unheard;

I only beg to speak one word:

" 'Twill do no good to fret, and storm;

" The way to hush me is—reform.

ARGUMENT.

A R G U M E N T.

*Proposition—Invocation—expulsion of Fashion from France—reception in Eng-
 land—description of the goddess, and her temple—Fancy and Folly the
 guardians of her throne—description of them—of the modern female dress—
 Queen's birth-day—Fashion's speech—proposes a prize for the most fashion-
 able claimant—of the prize—a tête—French stays—gown—shoes—Artois
 buckles—a cork rump—Lady V——'s speech—Lady S-ft--n's speech—claims
 the prize as the reward of her merit—description of a fur cloak—the inven-
 tion of it disputed by Ch--l--te Sp-n--r—the battle—of those whom Ch--l--te
 slew—her triumph—trophies—speech for the prize—offers up her spoils to
 the goddess—challenges any heroine—C—— of D--by dares her to battle
 —simile of Reda and E. Adriatic—Ch--l--te attacks her enemy—fortune for
 a while in her favour—is beaten—D--by pulls down her rival—simile of a
 falling tower—peace established—D--by's speech—claims the prize—a new
 groupe advance—reflections on them.*

F A S H I O N.

A P O E M.

TASTE, and the nymph I sing, the first who bore
 The plumes of Fashion to the British shore ;
 Who much derided, laugh'd at Reason's laws,
 And fought whole years in giddy Fashion's cause ;
 At length gave rules which females since obey,
 And fix'd irrevocably Folly's sway.
 Her thoughtless vot'ries form a num'rous throng,
 And hence a race, who know not right from wrong.

Say, Muse, what madness could so far incense
 A female mind, to spurn at Common-sense;
 To strike with new amazement wond'ring man,
 And make a jest of Reason's noble plan;
 Disgrace her title for a painted vest;
 Dwells there such folly in a noble breast?

In Gallia long had giddy Fashion reign'd,
 And peacefully her painted throne maintain'd;
 Each hour gave fresh importance to her sway,
 And Frenchmen grew more foolish ev'ry day.
 Wild Frenzy signaliz'd the thoughtless crowd,
 And all submissive to the goddess bow'd;
 'Till conscious Reason rous'd them from her chains,
 And took the guidance of the mental reins.
 Her rebel subjects then, her precepts broke,
 Spurn'd at her feathers, and refus'd her yoke.
 Deserted, scorn'd, she left the faithless land,
 And sought new slaves to honour her command;
 To England came, mad Folly's darling school,
 The kind receiver of each foreign fool.

Here

Here statesman, barber, noble, belle, and whore,
 All join'd to bid her welcome to their shore.
 With joyous mouth each female hail'd the queen,
 And beauty for awhile forgot the spleen.
 Succeeding ages saw her gilded reign,
 And thousands follow'd in her painted train.
 But, more to prove her sway o'er modern belles,
 Hear what the Muse from record faithful tells.

Why run those crouds to yonder dome? why meet
 Those num'rous carriages in Oxford-Street?
 What drives the thoughtless multitude along?
 Why to the grand Pantheon press the throng?
 Say, Muse! for ev'ry thing to thee is known——
 'Tis FASHION there maintains her painted throne.

High on an eminence her temple stands,
 Where airy spirits issue her commands.
 Here daily sacrifice her vot'ries pay,
 Here all their worship, all their taste display.
 With varying colours is the goddess seen;
 This side looks red, while that discovers green.

Each

Each moment brings fresh wonders into view ;
 Mark well that yellow ! look again—'tis blue !
 Fantastic forms the regal mansion grace,
 Fancy and Folly decorate the place ;
 With force united join to guard her seat,
 And play their num'rous antics at her feet.
 Fancy each moment diff'rent forms assumes,
 And Folly's mirror dances with her plumes.
 By diff'rent means their duty each express,
 This holds the mirror, while that forms the dress.
 With temper'd judgment Fancy sometimes toils,
 But what her hands leave decent, Folly spoils.
 Hence, in strange habits is the goddess clad,
 One side fantastic, and the other mad.

Thro' all her temple tawdry objects rise,
 That strike th' amaz'd beholder with surprize.
 Caps, feathers, silks, adorn the walls around,
 And new inventions strew the wond'ring ground.
 Beauty here wears each hour some changing dress,
 One day scarce any, and the next day less.

One minute kindly ev'ry charm reveals,
 The next each hidden part with care conceals.
 To-day their gender's *pretty clear* made out;
 Tomorrow leaves the very sex in doubt.
 All, all pursue this airy, easy plan,
 To shew their want of sense whene'er they can.

'Twas on the day when loyal Britons pour
 Their vows to Heav'n, to bless the natal hour
 Of gracious Charlotte; when each face was seen,
 Proud to do homage to so good a queen:

'Twas on this day, when FASHION thus address'd
 The throng, and spoke the dictates of her breast.

" Attend, my children, ye who own my sway,
 " And hear the mighty business of this day.
 " With joy I've seen such actions, as would grace
 " Folly herself; nay, might obtain a place
 " In Bedlam's walls, had high desert its due,
 " Such wild extravagance proceeds from you.
 " But that your rising merits be preferr'd,
 " To-day each eager claimant shall be heard.

- “ Behold this suit complete of female dress,
 “ Adorn’d with ev’ry folly to excess.
 “ Plumes nod on plumes to make this head-dress higher,
 “ Curl answers curl, to elevate the spire.
 “ Frizzle to frizzle makes it perfect *ton*,
 “ And racks the tortur’d hair a *l’ Herisson*.
 “ French stays that shew how you obey my laws,
 “ And yield your gasping breath in Fashion’s cause;
 “ French stays, that shew how little ladies care
 “ For husbands, reputation, or an heir;
 “ French stays adorn the prize; and on this gown
 “ Shines all the lustre of the *Melbourn brown*.
 “ These shoes, the strangers of a moment’s ease,
 “ Are made so nice, they’d cripple a Chinese.
 “ While buckles, fitted for a coach of state,
 “ Shall load the lab’ring feet that scarce can lift the weight.
 “ This Rump of Cork, with artful skill design’d,
 “ To form a graceful prominence behind
 “ Is added; and these all shall deck the fair
 “ Who most shall prove deserving of my care.

“ With

“ With joy I see your emulation rise !

“ Now speak your just pretensions to the prize.”

She ceas'd, and onward came a num'rous crowd

Of giggling females, laughing, talking loud.

At length all hush'd, one graceful way'd her fan,

Curtsey'd to all around, and thus began.

“ If strict observance, goddess, of thy laws,

“ Can give a mortal title to applause ;

“ I sure shall live consign'd to deathless fame,

“ And belles for ages reverence my name.

“ Still have I worship'd thee thro' all my life,

“ My study this, to be a modish wife.

“ Say, who shall dare true Genius to restrain ?

“ My mother found authority was vain.

“ What tho' a nursery my charms confin'd !

“ It could not check the fallies of my mind.

“ What tho' debarr'd from ev'ry pleasing sport !

“ My thoughts still run upon the glitt'ring court.

“ Tho' H—t—rd strove my spirit to oppress,

“ And mortified me with the meanest dress ;

“ My

- " My taste, in rags, conspicuous still shone,
 " I practis'd visiting, tho' all alone.
 " Envied Devonia, as I saw her pass,
 " Then ape'd her easy loll before the glass.
 " Wish'd, till I thought I drove along; then sigh'd
 " To find 'twas only an ideal ride.
 " With aching eyes still view'd each tasty gown,
 " 'Till V——rs usher'd me upon the town.
 " All then was pleasure; each revolving day,
 " I strove to shew how much I felt thy sway.
 " To thee, with double ardour paid my vows,
 " And grateful made a * barber of my spouse.
 " I knew the sacrifice would please, and gave
 " My lord, my master, to be Fashion's slave.
 " Gods, with what raptures to the glass I flew,
 " That gave the tottering head-dress to my view!

* Among the many proofs, that might be brought, of the ridiculous passion for dress, that at present prevails, none is more remarkable than the behaviour of this Lord; who, to please the extravagant fancy of his Lady, became himself the chief assistant, in making her the laughing-stock of the town; raising with his own hands the fabric of Folly, that rendered her, thro' the course of a whole winter, derided, and despised.

" That

" That shew'd the nodding plumes that crown'd my head ;

" I bless'd the gracious day that saw me wed !

" But ah, I rave ! no more these joys invite ;

" Farewell the tattling Square, farewell delight !

" Pleasure no more shall warm this aching heart ;

" 'Twas Christie's hammer bid all joy depart.

" Yet sure my former deeds deserve the prize,

" Tho' grief now dims the lustre of these eyes :

" Or if the gift some happier fair await,

" Let pity drop a tear upon my fate."

She ceas'd and wept. But thro' the joyous crowd

Run noisy mirth. The goddesses laugh'd aloud

To see her pain ; nor to her grief attends,

'Tis quite a bore to pity fallen friends.

At length fair S—ft—n thro' the clamour broke,

To prove her just pretensions, and thus spoke.

" By eloquence let others gain their aim ;

" I on my well-known merits ground my claim ;

" Thou know'st, great goddess, how I own thy pow'r,

" And pay my fervent sacrifice each hour.

" Give then the laurel to my earnest prayer,

" The just reward of all my former care.

" Or if my vows avail not, and there need

" Some proof of merit, then this cloak shall plead.

She ceas'd; and from her lighten'd shoulders drew

The mighty work, and held it up to view.

There dazzling pink upon the fawn glow'd,

That all the genius of its mistress shew'd.

Here ravag'd forests gave up half their race,

And lin'd the work with fur, to give new grace;

While brutes politely left their bodies bare,

Proud that their skins should deck the blooming fair.

Within the hollow of the monstrous hood,

There seem'd some shaggy tyrant of the wood;

That, as he slumber'd in the cave within,

Skirted the hairy edges with his skin.

All stood amaz'd; and S—f—n thus begun;

" Sure, mighty goddess, now the prize is won!

" Is there one else who dare dispute my fame?"

She spoke, and instant Ch—l—e Sp—n—r came,

And

And cried, " 'Tis mine, the mighty prize is mine !

" Thy ill-got honours, daring maid, resign.

" I stand th' inventress of yon wond'rous cloak ;

" My neck first groan'd beneath that shaggy yoke.

" Here, goddess, here the mighty palm bestow,

" Nor credit the delusion of my foe."

Long time the noisy contest doubtful hung ;

With S—ft—n ! Ch—l—e ! all the mansion rung.

Louder, and louder yet, the clamours rise,

And peals of thunder rend the trembling skies.

Now Discord shook her murky wings on high,

Chance gives them weapons ; and one gen'ral cry

Involves the whole. From side to side the rage

Of battle thunders ; parties now engage

In all the din of war. Here S—ft—n fought

With Amazonian strength, and Ch—l—e fought

For single combat. Now, my Muse, proclaim

Those heroines, whose actions brought them fame

Immortal. Sing the numbers Ch—l—e flew,

When from her side the corking-pin she drew.

First,

First, Gr--v--r met her fate, and call'd in vain
 For royal help, then sunk upon the plain.
 Next Cr--v--n came, with Gallia by her side,
 And felt th' avenging weapon: Life's red tide
 Came bubbling forth, she call'd on —, and died.
 Whole troops give way before the furious maid,
 As on she bent her course, and high display'd
 The mighty trophies of her conqu'ring arms,
 And gloried in the scars that stain'd her charms.
 Vaunting she fallied; in one hand she bore
 The mangled *tête* that vanquish'd M-lb-*rn* wore.
 A captive rump of cork the other grac'd,
 That — in gen'rous mood on — plac'd:
 Beneath her feet, caps, ruffles, tumbled lay,
 The fatal relics of this dreadful day.
 Here eye-brows lay that made old age seem youth,
 And there a set of teeth without a mouth.
 Here hoops and petticoats bestrew'd the floor
 And all the perfum'd goods of Warren's store:
 There

There lay torn gauze, and here a broken fan.
 With pride she view'd the waste, and thus began :
 " Now let the laurel on these temples twine,
 " Grant me thy favour, queen, the prize is mine.
 " Let other heroes massy weapons wield,
 " This pin's my falchion, and this rump my shield.
 " Hear me, great goddess, hear my fervent pray'r ;
 " Accept the grateful off'rings that I bear.
 " Behold to thee I consecrate these spoils,
 " To thee devote the trophies of my toils :
 " To thee with pious zeal these gifts I bear,
 " This captive tippet, and this head of hair.
 " Or if some envious female dare dispute
 " My lawful title to the glorious suit ;
 " Here let them meet me, here I'll wait the fight,
 " And prove by force of arms the prize my right."
 She spoke, and angry D—by forward came :
 " Yes, daring woman, I'll dispute thy fame !
 " Shall D—by see thee conquer ? Shall these eyes
 " Behold those recreant limbs sustain the prize ?

" Forbid it, Fashion, oh, forbid it, Taste!

" Sooner shall brilliant gems give way to paste;

" Sooner shall op'ras to dull plays give place;

" Than Fashion's gifts add lustre to thy face.

" Come on! I dare thee to the glorious field;

" Begin th' attack; or, haughty female, yield!

" Nay, never fly, thou coward, to thy haunts;

" Eat up my fan, or else revoke those vaunts."

She said, and eager flew to the attack;

While wary Ch-l-e sprung three paces back.

As when Reda and L'Abadie engage,

And face to face the rattling combat wage,

Now stand with watchful eye, and mark the foil;

Now thrust with vigour, now with speed recoil;

With agile movements carry on th' assault,

Now lounge and parry, now attack and halt;

Both look tremendous, ev'ry feature fierce,

Quarte parries *quarte*, and *tierce* retorts to *tierce*;

Th' approaching thrust with active spring they fly,

Then view each op'ning with determin'd eye;

On guard both stand ; *a nous !* exclaims Reda,
 And sternly L'Abadie replies, *ba, ba !*
 Thus stood the fair ones long ; on ev'ry brow
 Sat expectation of the dreadful blow,
 'Till Ch--l--e eager rush'd upon the foe ;
 With mad'ning fury seiz'd her by the hair,
 And ravag'd half the beauties of the fair.
 With dextrous arm o'er ev'ry member rang,
 And brandish'd high in air her splinter'd fan.
 Paffe, powder, pins, in ruthless ruin lay,
 And seem'd to prove her victor of the day.
 But wary D—by, with dissembled ill
 Deceitful groan'd ; for now, with timely skill,
 Collecting all her force she firmly stood,
 And from her foe provok'd the crimson flood.
 Fierce on her head the rattling peal she pour'd,
 And on each aching limb the tempest show'r'd.
 Long time she dealt her blows ; now high, now low,
 She fought, and tore each trapping of the foe.

At And roll in fashion's hiss her D—by's name.

At length, collecting all her powerful might,
 With one decisive effort clos'd the fight:
 Low from its lofty summit pull'd her *tête*,
 And gave the final blow to Ch—l—e's fate.
 Down fell the ruins; Nature shook around,
 And trembled to her centre; o'er the ground
 Wild havock reign'd; as when with mould'ring walls
 Some tower totters, 'till at length it falls,
 And thunders wide its ruins o'er the plains,
 'Whelming the cottages of frighten'd swains,
 So fell the *tête*; and as the ground it strew'd,
 Too plainly prov'd its owner was subdued.
 Her fate decided, giddy factions cease,
 The victors and the vanquish'd join in peace,
 Order establish'd—thus the conqu'ror spoke,
 And in these words the reigning silence broke:

“ If victory alone could prove my right,
 “ And the decisive issue of this fight;
 “ The glorious prize should magnify my fame,
 “ And roll in Fashion's lists her D—by's name.

“ But

- " But as intrinsic merit is preferr'd,
 " I twice deserve it; let my claim be heard.
 " Thou, FASHION, art my goddess! I adore
 " Thy name alone, and call all else a bore.
 " Thee have I honour'd thro' each stage of life,
 " A maid of spirit, and a modish wife.
 " By ev'ry action have I faithful tried
 " To shew my taste, my folly, and my pride.
 " Have I not, constant to this *tonniss* plan,
 " Long shone the wonder of admiring man?
 " Have I not set new fashions to the town,
 " That gain'd thee credit, and myself renown?
 " But let my actions celebrate my name;
 " My *livery* shall rise to deathless fame.
 " Ev'n in my footman is my folly shewn;
 " Their dress no mind could fancy but my own.
 " Let others dully answer Reason's call,
 " And mind her systems—I despise them all!
 " Let others by the rules of sense be led,
 " And give their slaves white stockings—mine wear red!

" Their martial strut, their fierce, terrific air,

" Bespeak my spirit, and my taste declare.

" All the smart feather in their hats admire,

" They look like Milton's angels in hell-fire.

" Nor can ev'n manly sports my soul appal;

" Let D—t wield the bat, I'll catch the ball.

" Let T--k--v---e in cricketing give way;

" I and my ladies will *all England* play.

" In bowling none exceed me; late, oh, queen,

" We shew'd our matchless skill upon the green.

" There clad *en' homme* did thy fair vot'ries shine;

" And know, the happy thought was solely mine I

" But if your powers greater proofs require,

" And further vouchers of my taste desire;

" Hear what shall celebrate my lasting name *;

" And give a sanction to my lawful claim.

* The following lines are founded on a Morning-Post Anecdote, the copy of which I have here given :

" A few evenings ago, Lady D—y, being engaged to a ball, and dressed for the occasion, was informed, that her chairmen were not in the way; when, after waiting a considerable time, Mr. S—, and another gentleman, who were to be of the same party, and were also dressed, offered to

yoke

" 'Twas night; and rapid thro' the rattling Square,
 " The chariots roll'd; while ev'ry modish fair
 " Sought the dead hours when vulgars sleep, to kill
 " In the dear joys of Ombre and Quadrille.
 " *Past ten o'clock*, the yawning watchman cried;
 " *Past ten o'clock*, the distant streets replied.
 " The rattling knocker spoke the guest's approach,
 " And blazing flambeaux glar'd from ev'ry coach.
 " With rapid steps the powder'd lacqueys run,
 " And all proclaim'd the festive rout begun.
 " The punctual party met, with eager ear
 " Attended for th' arrival of my chair;

yoke themselves, and convey her ladyship to the house of rendezvous. Mr. G——, of the guards, wishing not to be behind-hand in point of gallantry, prayed that her ladyship would permit him the honour of attending her with a *flambeau*. The several services were immediately accepted, and the gentlemen, covered with livery great-coats, proceeded to do duty. When her ladyship was set down, the attendants were observed to follow her up to the apartment where the company were assembled. In vain the servants of the house attempted to prevent them; they forced their way, and sat down, to the no-small wonder of the company, who were totally at a loss what to make of the matter. However, the *human ponies*, and the *military lacquey*, soon removed the general embarrassment, by casting off their upper garments, and appearing in their proper persons. The adventure produced high entertainment, and is at present the favourite topic of conversation among the *bon ton*!"

" But,

- " But, ah, they little thought, what cares attend
" The bosom of their disappointed friend !
" Alas, my drunken servants idly roam,
" And left their downcast mistress sad at home.
" With gloomy mind I mourn'd my cruel fate,
" And pass'd one moment in my life sedate.
" St--r--r with pitying aspect view'd my care,
" First sigh'd compassionate, then curs'd the chair ;
" Thro' all dear Vallouy's movements graceful run,
" Bow'd with enchanting ease, and thus begun.
" Oh, that some soothing strains would gild my tongue !
" Oh, that persuasion on my accents hung !
" Then might I hope to calm your rising grief,
" And give those heaving breasts some kind relief.
" Yet cease thy tears, sad fair one, wipe those eyes ;
" Thou lovely mourner, hush those piercing sighs.
" The gods, in pity to thy suff'rings, send
" The wish'd assistance, that thy cares may end.
" Permit thy chair to be by St--r--r borne.
" Can I stand idly by and see thee mourn ?

" He

" He said, and L——y helping, quickly brought
 " The chair, and eas'd me from a load of thought.
 " With lighted flambeau Gr—l—e clear'd the throng;
 " *En pas de rigadoon* we danc'd along.
 " Swift my supporters mov'd their dancing feet,
 " And safely brought me to the crowded street.
 " The sounding peal re-echo'd thro' the hall,
 " And usher'd me to pleasure, and the ball.
 " Here all aloud confess'd thy potent name;
 " And thus, great queen, the mighty prize I claim."
 She spoke; and fought the prize with eager hand;
 When joyous strait advanc'd a motley band,
 A giggling throng, by ev'ry folly led,
 With wild Devonia laughing at their head;
 Titt'ring, their pray'rs before the throne preferr'd,
 And begg'd their diff'rent merits might be heard.
 With envious eye, the groupe each female view'd;
 One call'd them ugly, and another rude,
 One cried, she saw some beauty in this face;
 But then the shape was quite devoid of grace.

Another, that the nose was crooked hints;
 Then—don't you think, my dear, the rather squints?
 Her dress is fancied with some little taste,
 But then those plumes are horridly misplac'd.
 That cap is quite *outré*, and then her hair—
 Sure she has got a most unmeaning stare
 Well! some are wond'rous fond to let men gaze—
 I vow I think she'd better wear no stays!
 Pray step this way! (the ready critic came,)
 Now don't you think she walks a little lame?
 Thus all their censures on each other pass'd,
 And kindly found some fault, from first to last.
 At length the goddess hush'd the buzzing croud,
 And bid the party speak their claims aloud.
 First then Devonia wav'd her motley fan,
 Pok'd out her head and rump, and thus began.

11. 7. 19

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

Speedily will be Published,

F A S H I O N.

A P O E M.

ADDRESSED TO THE

LADIES OF GREAT-BRITAIN.

I N T W O B O O K S.

B O O K S E C O N D.

*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
Corpora*

Specimen only is published

T. A. S. H. I. O. M.

A. P. O. E. M.

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I. M. T. W. O. B. O. O. K. S.

BOOK SECOND

Is not a full account of the first

Copy